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Introduction of a Bill

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Statement of Senator Mike Mansfield (D., Montana)

Mr. President, I introduce for appropriate reference a bill to permit weekly newspapers to suspend publication for not more than two issues in any one calendar year without loss of second-class mail privileges.

This bill would allow weekly newspapers which have been accorded the second-class mail privilege to suspend publication for vacation purposes for not more than two issues in any one calendar year without the necessity of applying for reentry as second-class matter on account of a change in frequency of issue. Under existing postal regulations a weekly newspaper must publish an edition each week, 52 weeks a year or he will loose his second-class postal privileges.

The weekly newspaper is the backbone of the journalistic world. These small newspapers play an important role in the thousands of communities through out the Nation. In most cases the staff of a weekly is composed of three or four people, in many cases less. It is not unusual to find an editor-publisher putting in his time as a printer, linotype operator, pressman, reporter and bookkeeper, all within the routine of one week.

Daily newspapers can afford, as a general rule, to give their employees a vacation, without causing an excessive burden on the remaining staff members. These larger organizations have access to part time help and can make allowances for vacations. If one person were to take two weeks off from his duties on a weekly newspaper it would be impossible in many cases to publish the newspaper. There are no harder workers in the journalistic field than those who operate and work on a weekly. They are entitled to a vacation each year. If the publisher ^{could} / afford to hire a substitute for several weeks, he would not be able to find one. As we all know there is not an excess of printers, linotype operators and reporters in communities of a few thousand populations.

This bill would allow the weekly newspapers to suspend publication for two weeks without loosing their second-class postal rate, which is so important to them. This bill will give the little fellows in the newspaper business a break, it will not cost the government a cent and will recognize a situation which needs adjusting and needs it now.

The passing of this bill by Congress will, when the States affected change their laws covering legal notices, be of inestimable value to the weekly publishers and give them the chance to take a much needed vacation each year, which they are barred from doing now. I sincerely hope that this bill will receive consideration from the Post Office and Civil Service Committee.

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